

# ĀNĀPĀNASATI – ELEMENTARY

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## 1. Introduction to the Meditation Methods

There are two types of meditation in Buddhism: *Samatha* and *Vipassanā*. As mentioned in *Visuddhimagga*, there are 40 *Samatha* Meditation Subjects:

<b>Ten Kasiṇas</b> ( <i>Dasa Kasiṇas</i> )	① White <i>Kasiṇa</i> , ② Brown <i>Kasiṇa</i> , ③ Yellow <i>Kasiṇa</i> , ④ Red <i>Kasiṇa</i> , ⑤ Earth <i>Kasiṇa</i> , ⑥ Water <i>Kasiṇa</i> , ⑦ Fire <i>Kasiṇa</i> , ⑧ Wind <i>Kasiṇa</i> , ⑨ Light <i>Kasiṇa</i> , and ⑩ Space <i>Kasiṇa</i> .
<b>Ten Kinds of Foulness</b> ( <i>Dasa Asubha</i> )	① The Bloated ( <i>Uddhumātaka</i> ) ② The Livid ( <i>Vinīlaka</i> ) ③ The Festering ( <i>Vipubbaka</i> ) ④ The Cut-Up ( <i>Vicchiddaka</i> ) ⑤ The Gnawed ( <i>Vikkhāyitaka</i> ) ⑥ The Scattered ( <i>Vikkhittaka</i> ) ⑦ The Hacked and Scattered ( <i>Hatavikkhittaka</i> ) ⑧ The Bleeding ( <i>Lohitaka</i> ) ⑨ The Worm-Infested ( <i>Puḷavaka</i> ) ⑩ Skeleton ( <i>Aṭṭhika</i> )
<b>Ten Kinds of Recollection</b> ( <i>Dasa Anussati</i> )	① Recollection of the Buddha ( <i>Buddhānussati</i> ) ② Recollection of the Dhamma ( <i>Dhammānussati</i> ) ③ Recollection of the Saṅgha ( <i>Saṅghānussati</i> ) ④ Recollection of Virtue ( <i>Sīlānussati</i> ) ⑤ Recollection of Generosity ( <i>Cāgānussati</i> ) ⑥ Recollection of Deities ( <i>Devatānussati</i> ) ⑦ Mindfulness of Death ( <i>Maraṇānussati</i> ) ⑧ Recollection of Peace ( <i>Upasamānussati</i> ) ⑨ Mindfulness Occupied with the Body ( <i>Kāyagatāsati</i> ) ⑩ Mindfulness of Breathing ( <i>Ānāpānassati</i> )
<b>Four Divine Abidings</b> ( <i>Cattāro Brahmavihārā</i> )	① Loving Kindness ( <i>Mettā</i> ) ② Compassion ( <i>Karuṇā</i> ) ③ Sympathetic Joy ( <i>Muditā</i> ) ④ Equanimity ( <i>Upekkhā</i> )
<b>Four Immaterial Jhānas</b> ( <i>Arūpa Jhāna</i> )	① The Base of Boundless Space ( <i>Ākāśānañcāyatana Jhāna</i> ) ② The Base of Boundless Consciousness ( <i>Viññāṇaṇcāyatana Jhāna</i> ) ③ The Base of Nothingness ( <i>Ākiñcaññāyatana Jhāna</i> ) ④ The Base of Neither Perception nor Non-Perception ( <i>Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana Jhāna</i> )
<b>The One Defining</b>	① The Defining of The Four Elements
<b>The One Perception</b>	① The Perception of Repulsiveness In Nutriment

## 2. The Method of Developing *Ānāpānasati*

Despite having 40 meditation subjects, we mainly begin our meditation with *Ānāpānasati* (Mindfulness of Breathing) because many meditators had actually already practiced *Ānāpānasati* in their past lives. Therefore, you should try *Ānāpānasati* first. If you are unable to practice *Ānāpānasati*, you may change to other *kammaṭṭhāna* (meditation subjects). Changing to other meditation subjects is not a problem.

### 2.1. Environment and Posture During Meditation

Firstly, the Buddha said, in order to meditate, a meditator must choose to dwell in the forest, a quiet place or under a tree. This is because noise is a disturbance to the beginners. When their attention is on their breath, they might actually want to hear any sound of the surroundings, such as what people are talking about, and consequently, their concentration will drop.

During sitting meditation, you must sit cross-legged and keep your eyes closed. If your legs are painful, you may change the position of your legs to make yourself comfortable. Changing the position of your legs is not a problem. However, while changing the position of your legs, your mind must stick with knowing the breath, do not pay attention to the movement of your body.

You must keep your body straight, do not bend forward or backward. Bending body backward will cause your breath unclear and wandering thoughts will emerge. Bending body forward will not only make you become more tired, but will also cause your breathing to become short and rapid. Both of these conditions are not suitable for meditation. Besides keeping your body straight, your head must also be straight. Once you accidentally found your body has become not straight, slowly make your body straight while continuously knowing the breath.

The position of your hands does not require a certain position because this is not very important. So you may put your hands as you like, as long as you feel comfortable. The posture of your body is more important because improper posture will cause fatigue.

During meditation, you must close your eyes. Pay attention to the breath in between your nostrils and your upper lip (do not pay attention to the feeling on the skin), and find a place where the breath is clearly noticeable and be aware of it continuously. In order to prevent wandering thoughts and to know their breath more clearly, some meditators would control their breathing tightly and this would result in making their bodies and necks becoming tense and painful. Some meditators would even feel stiffness in their heads and experience headaches. Therefore, during your meditation, do not control your breathing. Although this problem could be considered minor initially, it will worsen gradually. By that time, you would feel tense and stiff, and this will be very uncomfortable.

### 2.2. Four Methods to Concentrate on the Breath

#### ① Knowing The Breath

For *Ānāpānasati*, initially, you only need to mindfully know the natural breath. At the beginning, you must determine (in silence): "I want to know the natural breath." And then, in-breath, know; out-breath, know; that's it. Do not control your breathing.

Next, if you have been able to concentrate on your breath for five minutes, you should determine: "Now I have already been able to concentrate for 5 minutes, I want to concentrate for 10 minutes." Determine gradually like this and increase the time of concentration to 15 minutes, 20

minutes, and even half an hour. Sometimes, for some meditators, after concentrating for half an hour, the *nimitta* will appear. However, do not pay attention to it because it is not stable at this stage. The *nimitta* at this stage could be very bright at one moment and disappears at the next moment. This is not the real *nimitta*.

The only remedy to treat a scattered mind is not to think and talk too much, and also to consistently maintain your mind on the breath whenever you are walking, standing, sitting, or lying down. In this way, after two to three days, your mind will become steadier and calmer, and your concentration will improve. During daily routine (outside sitting meditation), do not pay attention to the in-breath and the out-breath, just knowing the natural breath is enough.

Meditators who are not able to calm down by simply knowing the breath should try the counting method: "In-breath, out-breath, one; in-breath, out-breath, two; ... in-breath, out-breath, eight." You should count up to at least five but not exceeding ten. Counting too much will make your mind become unclear and counting too less will not help in cultivating concentration, and thus your meditation practice will end up not being successful. Those who are not able to use the counting method should give up this method and instead turn to know just the natural breath itself.

### **Examples of Mistakes**

- ① For some meditators, what they pay attention to is actually the pushing feeling of their breathing because their attention is on the quick pushing force around their nostrils. They actually know that this is incorrect because their breathing is too quick, unlike the natural breathing. Therefore, if you notice the pushing feeling accidentally, you should determine: "I do not want to concentrate on the pushing feeling of my breathing. I just want to know the natural breath." By this time, the pushing feeling would fade and finally disappear naturally.
- ② Some meditators concentrate on the touching of their breath on their nostrils. The more they concentrate on the touching, the harder and more painful the touching point will be. With this way, *Ānāpānasati* will not be successful. This is why meditators should only know their natural breath.
- ③ Some meditators put their attention too far from their nostrils while knowing their breath and this makes their breath unclear and thus they are unable to concentrate for a long time. Therefore, meditators should not concentrate on the breath which is too far from the nostrils, instead, they should just know the breath in between the nostrils and the upper lip.
- ④ After noticing the breath, the attention of some meditators tends to move towards inside their nostrils and consequently they tend to concentrate on the inside of their nostrils. This will eventually cause stiffness and pain to their nostrils. Therefore, meditators must determine: "I do not want to concentrate on the touching inside the nostrils. I just want to know the breath in between my nostrils and my upper lip."

This could be difficult initially. To make this easier, you are suggested to close your eyes and place a finger of yours beneath your nostrils to detect the breath. When you are able to do so, remove your finger and know the natural breath by mind. If you put up effort like this, your breath will be clearer gradually and you will be able to practice *Ānāpānasati* successfully.

- ⑤ If some meditators initially feel coldness around their nostrils and feel calm, they actually notice the coldness. After two or three days, they would feel their nostrils become hotter and hotter, as if being burned by a fire, and this is very uncomfortable.

Why is this so? This is because what they are paying attention to is the touching of the breath on

their skin instead of the breath itself. The human body consists of 12 characteristics which are hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness, the nature of flowing, the nature of cohesion, hotness, coldness, the nature of supporting and the nature of pushing. And what they notice are the characteristics of coldness and hotness. At the beginning, there is only a little feeling and it can even be very calm, but when the feeling become clearer later, it could become very insufferable. By that time, even right after their eyes are closed, hotness could be felt and it will be very uncomfortable. Then, their meditation could not be continued.

As we know, using *Ānāpānasati* one can attain at most the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna*, and in order to attain this one must not pay attention to any feeling caused by the breathing. This means that you should not be aware of the 12 feelings (characteristics) of your body such as coldness, hotness, hardness, etc., but only to fully know the natural breath. Determine with a single mind: "I just want to know the natural breath." With this, even if you have any feeling, as long as you do not pay attention to them, they will disappear naturally.

- ⑥ If meditators concentrate on the passageways their breath passes through, their mind will follow their breath into the abdomens and then out from their noses to places very far away. The concentration of such meditators could hardly improve. Therefore, your mind should not travel with your breath, instead, you should only know your natural in-breath and out-breath.

## ② Long and Short Breath

If you are unable to concentrate for half an hour or 45 minutes, you may change to the "Long and Short Breath" stage. The long breath is the breath which is slow and long, and the short breath is the breath which is quick and short. The first stage is to know the in-breath and out-breath. The second stage is to know the pace of the breath. As for the breath - how slow or how quick, how long or how short, - all of these should be ignored, otherwise your mind will be tired.

The stage of "Knowing the Breath" and the stage of the "Long and Short Breath" should be practiced together. If you are able to concentrate for an hour, the *nimitta* will become more stable, but please do not pay attention to it yet because the *nimitta* at this stage could be not firm enough.

## ③ Whole Breath

If the previous two stages can be successfully practiced, you may proceed to the third stage which is the "Whole Breath". At this stage, the meditator should be aware of the whole breath clearly and continuously from the beginning to the end. But please do not think of where the breath is going to. You should only know the natural breath in between your nostrils and your upper lip, and your mind should not follow your breath into and out from your body.

By this time, meditators should practice the stage of "Knowing the Breath," the stage of the "Long and Short Breath" and the stage of the "Whole Breath" together:

Begin with knowing the breath (about half an hour), then knowing the long and short breath (about half an hour), and then knowing the whole breath (about half an hour). The *nimitta* could appear at this time but do not pay attention to it yet.

If the *nimitta* has not appeared, meditators should continue to practice these three stages alternately and should not proceed to the fourth stage, which will be explained after this. Please remember that those who have not practiced until the third stage should not practice the fourth stage, otherwise, the mind will become unsteady and the *nimitta* will not appear.

#### 4 Subtle Breath

If you have practiced the previous three stages successfully and want to practice the fourth stage, they should practice the first stage for about 10 minutes, the second stage for about 10 minutes, and the third stage for about 10 minutes.

If the *nimitta* becomes brighter, more stable, and does not disappear even after 1 or 2 hours, you can then practice the fourth stage which is the "Subtle Breath".

At this stage, one practices to know the natural subtle breath but please do not pay attention to the breath's in, out, long, short, beginning and end. At this stage, the breath becomes weaker and more unclear, hence, it is not easy to concentrate.

At this stage, paying attention to the breath a little in front of the nostrils is wrong because by doing so, the *nimitta* will not move to around the nostrils and combine with the breath. Therefore, it is very important to continuously be aware of the subtle breath in between the nostrils and the upper lip. If you continue doing so, the *nimitta* will come to combine with the breath but please do not pay attention to the *nimitta* as yet. Instead, kindly continue to know the subtle breath until the subtle breath disappears, only then you can determine: "I want to concentrate on the *nimitta*."

At the fourth stage, if the subtle breath disappears, do not try to find the subtle breath or control the feeling of the subtle breath because by doing so your concentration will deteriorate. Therefore, at this time, you should only proceed to concentrate on the *nimitta*.

- Although there are four stages in *Ānāpānasati*, this does not mean that every meditator must learn all the four stages. In fact, you may just know only the natural breath.
- If you are able to concentrate on the *nimitta* which is combined with the breath, you can move a step forward to determine: "I want to concentrate on the *nimitta* for 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours, and 4 hours."
- Concentrating on the *nimitta* means continuously knowing the *nimitta* by mind instead of watching the *nimitta*.

### 2.3. Three Types of *Nimitta*

<b><i>Parikamma Nimitta</i></b>	The breath to which attention is initially paid is called <i>Parikamma Nimitta</i> .
<b><i>Uggaha Nimitta</i></b>	As concentration improves, the grayish light that appear is called <i>Uggaha Nimitta</i> . However, it is not very stable, so it could disappear at this stage.
<b><i>Paṭibhāga Nimitta</i></b>	The <i>nimitta</i> at third stage becomes more stable gradually, and if it combines with the breath, becomes brilliantly bright, and does not disappear at any time, then it is considered the real <i>nimitta</i> to attain the 1 <sup>st</sup> <i>Jhāna</i> .

## 2.4. Beginners' Problems

### 2.4.1. Why Can't Beginners Concentrate Easily During Meditating?

Beginners are not be able to concentrate easily due to lots of wandering thoughts because in our living world there are a lot of lusts and people like to plan a lot. Hence, once one's eyes are closed and the meditation has started, their minds would think continuously about the future and the past. If you want to attain *jhāna* successfully, you must be diligent because success in meditation is not easy to be achieved.

Although we might have learnt and practiced meditation in our past lives and gain some *paramī*, it is just too far from now and its effect is just too weak. Therefore, not everyone is able to attain *jhāna* quickly. The total time to attain *jhāna* and the speed of improving are different from one person to another.

### 2.4.2. The Importance of Guidance from a Good Teacher

A good teacher is very important to a meditator who wants to be successful in meditation. You should attend the meditation interview frequently to seek answers from the meditation teacher any question that you may have on meditation or to seek solutions to any problem that you may face during your meditation.

### 2.4.3. What should the Beginners do with the *Nimitta*?

Know the *nimitta* is there but ignore it ...

According to the "*Visuddhimagga*", when the concentration is steady, the *nimitta* will appear. However, at the beginning, do not pay attention to it, its shape and its color. Do not investigate. Although the *nimitta* is in front of you and you will be able to see it even if you ignore it, you should determine: "I want to ignore it." If the *nimitta* disappears when you determine like this, do not be unhappy because the *nimitta* could sometimes appear in front of you, sometimes behind you or sometimes very far away. Therefore, do not care about how is it, its shape, and its color.

The *nimitta* could be very bright and because of this some meditators would have their tears welled. Ignore this. At this stage, the mind should be kept steady and continue to know the breath only. If you have been able to concentrate for about half an hour, you should determine to concentrate for 45 minutes, 1 hour, and more gradually.

# THE METHOD OF DEVELOPING ĀNĀPĀNASATI

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## 1. Nimitta in the Bhavaṅga

### 1.1. The Method of Developing Ānāpānasati

- ① Now you are at the stage of Knowing the Breath, so put your attention on the breath in between your nostrils and your upper lip (do not pay attention to the feeling on the skin) . At the beginning, you will only need to be aware of your natural breath.
- ② After being able to continuously know the *nimitta* for one or two hours, you must check the *nimitta* in the *Bhavaṅga* (heart base, *Hadaya Vatthu*). Some meditators do not understand what the *Bhavaṅga* is. The *Bhavaṅga* here is the *Bhavaṅga* Transparent Element in the heart, is also known as heart base. That means, if the *nimitta* exists continuously for 1 or 2 hours, you must check the *nimitta* in the heart base.

### 1.2. How To Discern *Nimitta* in the Heart Base

- ① At the beginning, mindfully know the breath for about 5 minutes. After that, if the *nimitta* appears then it is correct. However, the mind will not be steady enough at the beginning of mindfully knowing the *nimitta*, so, you might not be able to maintain for a long time. Therefore, you must start your sitting with mindfully knowing only the breath.
- ② After several minutes, determine: "I want to mindfully know the *nimitta*." After your mind have entered the *nimitta*, maintain your mind in the *nimitta*, do not pay attention to any feeling of your body and your mind. During mindfully knowing the *nimitta*, some meditators may encounter some problems. For example, when they mindfully know the *nimitta*, resulting in their mind becoming steadier, the feeling of joy will appear, followed by the pleasant feeling. Subsequently, both feelings may disappear altogether. Then, the meditators may end up without knowing anything at the end. Why is this so? The reason is because their mind has put in too much effort and their concentration has not been steady enough.
- ③ As a beginner, if you are able to mindfully know the *nimitta* successfully for about 1 hour, by the time reaching 1 hour, you must determine (in silence): "I want to discern the *nimitta* in the heart base." Some meditators determine wrongly: "I want to check/discern the heart." Then, their mind move quickly from the *nimitta* around the nostrils to the inside of their heart and consequently they only see their heart or the blood inside their heart. Therefore, if you want to discern the *nimitta*, you must determine: "I want to discern the *nimitta* in the heart base."
- ④ Mindfully know the *nimitta* around your nostrils and turn your attention to the heart base, then you will notice another *nimitta*. Discern the color, shape, and size in its middle and the surrounding. Do not discern too long or too short. Your heart will beat uncomfortably if you discern too long and you will not be able to see the *nimitta* clearly if you discern too short. Some meditators determine wrongly: "I want to discern the *bhavaṅga*." If they do, then they will only see the *bhavaṅga* transparent element but not the *nimitta*. Every meditator has different problems. Therefore, during discerning the *nimitta*, you must determine (in silence): "I want to discern the *nimitta* in the heart base."

- ⑤ Discerning the *nimitta* in the heart base requires about 1 minute only. Check the color in the middle and the surrounding of the *nimitta* in the heart base. The color in the middle is the color of the *nimitta* and the color of the surrounding is the color of the *bhavaṅga* transparent element. The *nimitta* is dependent on the middle of the *bhavaṅga* transparent element. What is the meaning of “dependent on”? Let’s say there is a thread on my hand, this means the thread is dependent on my hand. Similarly, the robe I am wearing is dependent on my body. In the same way, the *nimitta* is dependent on the *bhavaṅga* transparent element. The *bhavaṅga* transparent element is not the *bhavaṅga* mind. The *bhavaṅga* mind is a *citta* while the *bhavaṅga* transparent element is a *rūpa*. Both terms are different in meaning. The *bhavaṅga* mind” is the mind experienced during deep sleep. The object of the *bhavaṅga* mind is the object of the death mind thought process of the first past life.
- ⑥ It is okay if you fail to discern the *nimitta* in the heart base for the first time. Put your attention on the *nimitta* around the nostrils and mindfully know it. Then, after half an hour, decide to discern the *nimitta* in the heart base for a second time. Discern for about 1 minute. You must determine (in silence): “I want to discern the *nimitta* in the heart base.” If the color in the middle and the surrounding of the *nimitta* can be discerned then it is enough.
- ⑦ Discerning the *nimitta* in the heart base is not concentrating on the *nimitta* in the heart base and is not moving the concentration down nor moving the *nimitta* from the surrounding of the nostrils down. Just turn your attention to the heart base and discern the *nimitta* in it.
- ⑧ Those who have done discerning the *nimitta* in the heart base at this stage need to proceed to the next stage which is to discern the five *jhāna* factors.

## 2. Five *Jhāna* Factors (*Jhānaṅga*)

### 2.1. How to Discern the Five *Jhāna* Factors?

- ① Initially, mindfully know the breath (5 mins), then determine: “I want to mindfully know the *nimitta*.”
- ② Mindfully know the *nimitta* (about 1 hour), then determine: “I want to discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors.”
- ③ Turn your attention to the heart base, discern the *nimitta* and the five *jhāna* factors (at the same time) there.
- ④ At the time of discerning the five *jhāna* factors, determine to discern each factor. How this is done will be explained in a following section.

### 2.2. The Meaning of the Five *Jhāna* Factors (*Jhānaṅga*)

Five <i>Jhāna</i> Factors	Definition
<b><i>Vitakka</i></b>	initial application of the mind; it is the applying of the mind on the object, the <i>Ānāpāna Paṭibhāga Nimitta</i> .
<b><i>Vicāra</i></b>	sustained application of the mind; the continuous sustaining of the mind on the <i>Ānāpāna Paṭibhāga Nimitta</i> .
<b><i>Pīti</i></b>	joy/liking for the object, <i>Ānāpāna Paṭibhāga Nimitta</i> .



<b>Sukha</b>	pleasant feeling associated with experiencing the <i>Ānāpāna Paṭibhāga Nimitta</i> .
<b>Ekaggatā</b>	one-pointedness of mind on the <i>Ānāpāna Paṭibhāga Nimitta</i> .

These are the definitions of the five *jhāna* factors. They cannot be seen but can be discerned by mind (felt). The five *jhāna* factors are not our concentration objects. They are different *cetasikas* to be discerned.

### 2.3. How to Discern the Five *Jhāna* Factors

After mindfully knowing the *nimitta* for at least 1 hour, you need to discern the *nimitta* and the five *jhāna* factors in the heart base by determining (in silence) their names and definitions one by one (understand the function of each of them simultaneously) and discern them with your mind.

<b>Vitakka</b>	<p>“When I mindfully knew the <i>nimitta</i>, was the application of my mind on the <i>nimitta</i>, <i>Vitakka</i> felt in the <i>nimitta</i> in my heart base?”</p> <p>If so, the <i>cetasika</i> concerned will arise and the meditator is considered to have successfully discerned the <i>Vitakka jhāna</i> factor.</p>
<b>Vicāra</b>	<p>“When I mindfully knew the <i>nimitta</i>, was the continuous sustainment of my mind on the <i>nimitta</i>, <i>Vicāra</i> felt in the <i>nimitta</i> in my heart base?”</p> <p>If so, the same <i>cetasika</i> concerned as defined will arise and the meditator is considered to have successfully discerned the <i>Vicāra jhāna</i> factor.</p>
<b>Pīti</b>	<p>“When I mindfully knew the <i>nimitta</i>, was joy for the <i>nimitta</i>, <i>Pīti</i> felt in the <i>nimitta</i> in my heart base?”</p> <p>If so, the same <i>cetasika</i> concerned as defined will arise and the meditator is considered to have successfully discerned the <i>Pīti jhāna</i> factor.</p>
<b>Sukha</b>	<p>“When I mindfully knew the <i>nimitta</i>, was the happiness associated experiencing the <i>nimitta</i>, <i>Sukha</i> felt in the <i>nimitta</i> in my heart base?”</p> <p>If so, the same <i>cetasika</i> concerned as defined will arise and the meditator is considered to have successfully discerned the <i>Sukha jhāna</i> factor.</p>
<b>Ekaggatā</b>	<p>“When I mindfully knew the <i>nimitta</i>, was the one-pointedness of mind on the <i>nimitta</i>, <i>Ekaggatā</i> in the <i>nimitta</i> in my heart base?”</p> <p>If so, the same <i>cetasika</i> concerned as defined will arise and the meditator is considered to have successfully discerned the <i>Ekaggatā jhāna</i> factor.</p>

If all the five *jhāna* factors can be felt, you are considered to have successfully discerned them.

You must discern the five *jhāna* factors only in the *nimitta* in the heart base instead of discerning the five *jhāna* factors during concentrating on the *nimitta*.

### 2.4. Examples of Mistakes in Discerning the Five *Jhāna* Factors

- ① In an interview with a meditator, I asked him: “Have you successfully discerned the five *jhāna* factors?” He replied: “I moved the *nimitta* down.” This is wrong because I asked him to discern the five *jhāna* factors but he moved the *nimitta* down.

- ② In another interview, I asked: "Have you checked the five *jhāna* factors? Were they clear?" He answered: "Very clear." Then I asked: "How clear?" And he replied: "*Vitakka*, beating; *Vicāra*, beating; *Pīti*, beating; *Sukha*, beating; *Ekaggatā*, beating."

The above ways of discerning the five *jhāna* factors are wrong because the feelings of the five *jhāna* factors that they described are wrong.

When I asked: "Have you successfully discerned the five *jhāna* factors?" I am actually asking whether you have discerned the sign of each of the five *jhāna* factors which are in the heart base in order to confirm whether you have attained the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*.

If the five *jhāna* factors can be successfully discerned, then you are considered to have entered the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*.

**ATTENTION** ➔

At every stage of entering the *jhāna*, you should decide the total time of entering *jhāna* according to your own concentration level. The time stated as in the texts below are just suggestions and therefore they are written in brackets.

### 3. The First *Jhāna* & the Five Masteries

#### 3.1. How to Attain the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*?

- ① At the beginning, you must mindfully know the subtle breath (5 mins).
- ② Then, determine (in silence): "I want to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ③ When you feel the time is up, keeping your eyes closed, and immediately discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors.
- ④ The method of discerning the five *jhāna* factors is the same as what has been described previously.

After being able to attain the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* (having successfully discerned the five *jhāna* factors), you should proceed to practice the Five Masteries of the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*.

#### 3.2. The Five Masteries

Five Masteries	Definition
<b>Advertence Mastery</b> ( <i>Āvajjana Vasī</i> )	being able to discern the <i>jhāna</i> factors by <i>manodvāravajjana</i> after emerging from the <i>jhāna</i> .
<b>Attainment Mastery</b> ( <i>Samāpajjana Vasī</i> )	being able to enter the <i>jhāna</i> whenever you wish to.
<b>Determination Mastery</b> ( <i>Adhiṭṭhāna Vasī</i> )	being able to stay in the <i>jhāna</i> for as long as you determined to stay.

<b>Emergence Mastery</b> ( <i>Vuṭṭhāna Vasī</i> )	being able to emerge from the <i>jhāna</i> at the time you determined to emerge.
<b>Reflection Mastery</b> ( <i>Paccavekkhaṇā Vasī</i> )	being able to discern the <i>jhāna</i> factors by <i>javana</i> .

Among the Five Masteries, “Determination Mastery” is the most important. If “Determination Mastery” is successful, then all the five masteries can be successful.

### 3.3. The Five Masteries of the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*

- ① At the beginning, mindfully know the subtle breath (5 mins).
- ② Then, determine (in silence): “I want to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* (2 hours),” and continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ③ When you feel the time is up, keep your eyes closed and discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors. The method of discerning the five *jhāna* factors is the same as what has been described previously.
- ④ After the five *jhāna* factors are discerned successfully, check whether the time is 2 hours and 5 minutes. Is the time accurate?

At the stage of entering the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*, it must be at least 2 or 3 hours, and 4 hours is even better. After the Five Masteries of the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* is successful, you can progress to practice the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*.

## 4. The Second *Jhāna*

### 4.1. How to Attain the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*?

- ① Mindfully know the breath (5 mins).
- ② Then, determine: “I want to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins).” Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ③ When you feel the time (5 mins) is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors.
- ④ Then, reflect: “In the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*, *Vitakka* and *Vicāra* are coarse and uncomfortable, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable.”
- ⑤ Then, determine: “I want to enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (about 1 hour).”
- ⑥ Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*, and the feeling of joy (*Pīti*) and pleasant feeling (*Sukha*) will arise. Do not grab these feelings or throw them away. Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta* with a slightly joyful feeling towards the *nimitta*.
- ⑦ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the three *jhāna* factors which are *Pīti*, *Sukha* and *Ekaggatā*. The method of discerning is the same as discerning the five *jhāna* factors but without discerning *Vitakka* and *Vicāra*.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*, there isn't any need to apply or to continuously sustain your mind on the *nimitta*.

During discerning the *jhāna* factors, it is incorrect if the meditator is not able to discern any one of the *jhāna* factors concerned.

After being able to discern the three *jhāna* factors successfully, you can proceed to practice the Five Masteries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*.

## 4.2. The Five Masteries of 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*

- ① At the beginning, you must mindfully know the breath. Then determine: "I want to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)."
- ② After 5 mins, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors.
- ③ Then reflect: "In the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*, *Vitakka* and *Vicāra* are coarse and uncomfortable. The 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ④ After that, determine: "I want to enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours)."
- ⑤ Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*. When you feel the corresponding time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the three *jhāna* factors.
- ⑥ Then, check whether the time is accurate.

After the Five Masteries of the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* is successful, you can proceed to practice the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna*.

## 5. The Third *Jhāna*

### 5.1. How to Attain the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna*?

- ① Mindfully know the breath (5 mins).
- ② Then, determine: "I want to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ③ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors.
- ④ Then, reflect: "In the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*, *Vitakka* and *Vicāra* are coarse and uncomfortable, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑤ Then, determine: "I want to enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ⑥ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the three *jhāna* factors.
- ⑦ Then, reflect: "In the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*, *Pīti* is coarse and uncomfortable, the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑧ Then, determine: "I want to enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* (about 1 hour)."
- ⑨ Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta* and the pleasant feeling (*Sukha*) will arise. Do not grab the feeling or throw it away. Continue to know the *nimitta* with a slightly pleasant feeling towards the *nimitta*.
- ⑩ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the two *jhāna* factors which are *Sukha* and *Ekaggatā*.

After being able to discern the two *jhāna* factors successfully, you can proceed to practice the Five Masteries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna*.

## 5.2. The Five Masteries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna*?

- ① At the beginning, mindfully know the breath and then determine: "I want to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)."
- ② After 5 mins, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors.
- ③ Then, reflect: "In the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*, *Vitakka* and *Vicāra* are coarse and uncomfortable, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ④ Then decide: "I want to enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ⑤ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the three *jhāna* factors.
- ⑥ Then, reflect: "In the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*, *Pīti* is coarse and uncomfortable, the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑦ Then, determine: "I want to enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ⑧ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the two *jhāna* factors which are *Sukha* and *Ekaggatā*.
- ⑨ After that, check whether the time is accurate.

After the Five Masteries of the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* successful, you can proceed to practice the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna*.

## 6. The Fourth *Jhāna*

### 6.1. How to Attain the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna*?

- ① Mindfully know the breath (5 mins).
- ② Then, determine: "I want to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ③ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors.
- ④ Then, reflect: "In the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*, *Vitakka* and *Vicāra* are coarse and uncomfortable, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑤ Then, determine: "I want to enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ⑥ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the three *jhāna* factors.
- ⑦ Then, reflect: "In the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*, *Pīti* is coarse and uncomfortable, the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑧ Then, determine: "I want to enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ⑨ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the two *jhāna* factors which are *Sukha* and *Ekaggatā*.
- ⑩ Then, reflect: "In the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna*, *Sukha* is coarse and uncomfortable, the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑪ Then, determine: "I want to enter the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* (about 1 hour)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.

- ⑫ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the two *jhāna* factors which are *Upekkhā* (equanimity) and *Ekaggatā*. *Upekkhā* is equanimity, which is a condition of neither being attached to the object nor relinquishing the object.

Continue to mindfully know just the *nimitta*, do not pay attention to the existence of the breath and the sound. As soon as you think about it, then you are out of the *jhāna*, and you will feel the breath and hear the sound.

After being able to discern the two *jhāna* factors successfully, you can proceed to practice the Five Masteries of the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna*.

## 6.2. The Five Masteries of the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna*

- ① At the beginning, mindfully know the breath.
- ② Then, determine: "I want to enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)."
- ③ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the five *jhāna* factors.
- ④ Then, reflect: "In the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*, *Vitakka* and *Vicāra* are coarse and uncomfortable, the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑤ Then determine: "I want to enter the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ⑥ When you feel the time is up, discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the three *jhāna* factors.
- ⑦ Then, reflect: "In the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*, *Pīti* is coarse and uncomfortable, the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑧ Then, determine: "I want to enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* (5 mins)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ⑨ When you feel the time is up, then discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the two *jhāna* factors which are *Sukha* and *Ekaggatā*.
- ⑩ Then, reflect: "In the 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna*, *Sukha* is coarse and uncomfortable, the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* is more comfortable."
- ⑪ Then, determine: "I want to enter the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours)." Continue to mindfully know the *nimitta*.
- ⑫ When you feel the time is up, then discern the *nimitta* in the heart base and the two *jhāna* factors which are *Upekkhā* (equanimity) and *Ekaggatā*.
- ⑬ After that, check whether the time is accurate. If the time is accurate, then the Five Masteries of the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* is also successful.

# THE METHOD OF DEVELOPING THE FOUR IMMATERIAL *JHĀNAS* (8 *SAMĀPATTI*)

VEN. U PUÑÑĀNANDA

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017

## 1. *Ākāśānañcayatana Jhāna* (The Base of Boundless Space)

- ① Enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* of the White *Kasiṇa* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* (10 mins), then discern the *jhāna* factors and a reflection thus: “4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* of the White *Kasiṇa* is uncomfortable because it relies on the body. The Base of Boundless Space is calmer and more comfortable.”
- ② Pay attention to a space within the White *Kasiṇa*, expand the space to all directions and mindfully know the space.
- ③ Determine: “I want to enter The Base of Boundless Space (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours).” As concentration improves, light will appear, but do not pay attention to it, keep your mind to mindfully know only the space.
- ④ After (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours) emerging from Boundless Space Immaterial *Jhāna*, discern the two *jhāna* factors which are *Upekkhā* (equanimity) and *Ekaggatā*.

Practice until proficient. Do not need to decide on the length of time.

After being proficient, practice the Five Masteries of The Base of Boundless Space.

## 2. *Viññāṇañcāyatana Jhāna* (The Base of Boundless Consciousness)

- ① Enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* of the White *Kasiṇa* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection.
- ② Enter The Base of Boundless Space (10 mins). After emerging from the *jhāna*, discern the two *jhāna* factors which are *Upekkhā* and *Ekaggatā*. Then, reflect thus: “The Base of Boundless Space is close to the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* and is uncomfortable, The Base of Boundless Consciousness is calmer and more comfortable.”
- ③ Move your attention back to the Boundless Space and reflect: “the consciousness of The Base of Boundless Space is consciousness.” Then, determine: “I want to enter The Base of Boundless Consciousness (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours).” Mindfully know that “the consciousness of The Base of Boundless Space is consciousness”. Do not care about any condition of your body and any light.
- ④ After (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours) emerging from *jhāna*, discern the two *jhāna* factors which are *Upekkhā* and *Ekaggatā*.

Practice until proficient. Do not need to decide on the length of time.

After being proficient, then practice the Five Masteries of The Base of Boundless Consciousness.

### 3. *Ākiñcaññāyatana Jhāna* (The Base of Nothingness)

- ① Enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* of White *Kasīna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection.
- ② Enter The Base of Boundless Space (5 mins), then discern the two *jhāna* factors and make a reflection.
- ③ Enter The Base of Boundless Consciousness (10 mins). After emerging from the *jhāna*, discern the two *jhāna* factors which are *Upekkhā* and *Ekaggatā*. Then, reflect thus: "The Base of Boundless Consciousness is close to The Base of Boundless Space and is uncomfortable, The Base of Nothingness is calmer and more comfortable."
- ④ Move your attention back to the front and reflect: "In The Base of Boundless Consciousness, the consciousness of The Base of Boundless Space does not exist because in one mind moment mind does not capture more than one object. The absence of the consciousness of The Base of Boundless Space is Nothingness." Then, determine: "I want to enter The Base of Nothingness (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours)." Mindfully know that "the absence of the consciousness of The Base of Boundless Space is Nothingness".
- ⑤ After (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours) emerging from the *jhāna*, discern the two *jhāna* factors which are *Upekkhā* and *Ekaggatā*.

Practice until proficient. Do not need to decide on the length of time.

After being proficient, then practice the Five Masteries of The Base of Nothingness.

### 4. *Nevasaññānāsaññāyatana Jhāna* (The Base of Neither Perception Nor Non-Perception)

- ① Enter the 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna* of White *Kasīna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection; 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* (1 min), then discern the *jhāna* factors and make a reflection.
- ② Enter The Base of Boundless Space (1 min), then discern the two *jhāna* factors and make a reflection.
- ③ Enter The Base of Boundless Consciousness (5 mins), then discern the two *jhāna* factors and make a reflection.
- ④ Enter The Base of Nothingness (10 mins). After emerging from the *jhāna*, discern the two *jhāna* factors. Then, reflect thus: "The Base of Nothingness is close to The Base of Boundless Consciousness and is uncomfortable, The Base of Neither Perception Nor Non-Perception is calmer and more comfortable."
- ⑤ Move your attention back to the front and reflect: "the consciousness of The Base of Nothingness is calm." Then, determine: "I want to enter The Base of Neither Perception Nor Non-Perception (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours)." Mindfully know that "the consciousness of The Base of Nothingness is calm".



- ⑥ After (2 hours, 3 hours, 4 hours) emerging from the *jhāna*, discern the two *jhāna* factors which are *Upekkhā* and *Ekaggatā*.

Practice until proficient. Do not need to decide on the length of time.

After being proficient, then practice the Five Masteries of The Base of Neither Perception Nor Non-perception.

**Note:** The length of time of entering *jhānas* should be according to the instruction of the meditation teacher. Therefore, they are stated in brackets.

# ***DHĀTU KAMMAṬṬHĀNA***

## **FOUR-ELEMENTS MEDITATION**

**VEN. U PUÑÑĀNANDA**

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017

### **1. Four-Elements Meditation**

Four-Elements Meditation must be practiced by every meditator in order to proceed to the *Rūpa Kammaṭṭhāna*. *Vipassanā* must begin with practicing the Four-Elements Meditation: Earth element (*pathavī dhātu*), Water element (*āpo dhātu*), Fire element (*tejo dhātu*), and Wind element (*vāyo dhātu*).

- ① **Earth element:** Hardness, Roughness, Heaviness, Softness, Smoothness, Lightness.
- ② **Water element:** Nature of Flowing, Nature of Cohesion.
- ③ **Fire element:** Hotness, Coldness.
- ④ **Wind element:** Nature of Pushing, Nature of Supporting.

Meditator should not start with *Vipassanā* but *Samatha*. After discerning the 12 characteristics of the Four Great Elements until concentration becomes very steady, you will be able to notice the *Rūpa Kalāpa*, but this is not *Vipassanā*. You have to be able to clearly discern the Earth Element, Water Element, Fire Element and Wind Element of the *Rūpa Kalāpa*. At this stage, it is called the *Rūpa Kammaṭṭhāna* which is the preparation stage before starting *Vipassanā*.

Therefore, we begin our meditation practice with *Samatha*. Why do we have to practice *Samatha* first but not *Vipassanā* directly? According to the "*Samyuttanikāya*", The Buddha said, in meditation, a meditator must develop concentration (*Samādhi*), which can be divided into two kinds: *Upacāra Samādhi* and *Appanā Samādhi*. The 1<sup>st</sup> *Jhāna*, 2<sup>nd</sup> *Jhāna*, 3<sup>rd</sup> *Jhāna*, 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna*, The Base of Boundless Space, The Base of Boundless Consciousness, The Base of Nothingness and The Base of Neither Perception Nor Non-Perception are *Appanā Samādhi*. *Buddhānussati*, Four-Elements Meditation, etc. can only attain *Upacāra Samādhi*. *Upacāra Samādhi* is the *Samādhi* close to *Jhāna Samādhi* which is also named as *Appanā Samādhi*. At the stage of *Upacāra Samādhi*, the mind is well undistractable, very steady, and the five *jhāna* factors exist. This is why The Buddha said the meditators have to meditate and must possess concentration in order to be able to discern the five aggregates and the cause and effect of the internal and the external, in the past, present and the future.

### **2. Discerning the 12 Characteristics of the Four Great Elements**

We can attain *Upacāra Samādhi* by practicing Four-Elements Meditation. So, how do we start? Any of the 12 characteristics can be our starting point namely: hardness, roughness, heaviness, softness, smoothness, lightness, the nature of flowing, the nature of cohesion, hotness, coldness, the nature of pushing, and the nature of supporting in our body. All of these characteristics can be felt and the nature of pushing of Wind element is the most noticeable.

## ① Nature of Pushing

To begin, be aware of the breath and discern the nature of pushing when the breath pushes into the nostrils. If it is not clear enough, push your hands on the surface of a table or the floor and then discern the nature of pushing that exists between the flesh, muscles and bones.

As long as you are able to discern the nature of pushing clearly then it is enough.

Besides these two places, spread the feeling of pushing to the whole head. For the pushing nature of the breath, discern by your mind the center of your head. As you breathe, the breath pushes inside the head. Spread the feeling to the whole head.

Those who have successfully attain the 4<sup>th</sup> *Jhāna* can easily discern pushing throughout the whole body, from head to feet and then from feet to head. This can be done easily by those who have good concentration. As for the beginners, without good concentration, some of them cannot do it easily, therefore, they must discern it part by part.

Meditators who begin to discern pushing can start by discerning the nature of pushing of the breath which pushes into the head. Know it and spread it in the head. Discern pushing bit by bit, but remember not to discern it for too long in the head because this might cause headache.

After that, discern pushing in the body, such as in the abdomen and chest. Spread the feeling but keep it only on a part of the body. Do not move it to the feet yet. After being able to discern pushing in the body, move your attention to the hands and the feet to discern the nature of pushing in them.

During sitting meditation, due to the force of the body towards the ground, both of the feet will be tight and this is the nature of pushing of the Wind element. Bear in mind that you should only spread the pushing feeling after you have been able to discern it clearly. If you spread the pushing feeling when you have not been able to discern it clearly yet, you will not be able to discern it clearly after the pushing feeling is spreaded. Therefore, you can discern the nature of pushing in the feet, then in the body, then in the head, and then from the head to the body, then to the feet, circulating from feet to head and head to feet. When you are able to discern it clearly, then you can make the process faster (about 45 mins).

## ② Hardness

After being able to discern the nature of pushing, you can proceed to discern hardness.

Close your eyes and discern the hardness of the harder part among your flesh, muscles, skin, and bones. Spread the feeling but do not discern for too long because this is toilsome. It is enough as long as you know the feeling of hardness. After that, discern hardness in the body where the bone is harder than the skin. Spread to discern hardness in a larger part of the body. Hardness can be found more easily and more clearly in the feet due to the force of the body towards the ground. Spread to discern hardness in a larger part. You do not need to discern exactly where the hardness is located in the legs, you only need to know that it is the feeling of hardness.

While discerning the hardness in the body, besides the skin, discern also the hardness in the flesh, muscles and bones, and this method was taught by Venerable *Sāriputta*. Therefore, Meditation on the Four Great Elements begins with discerning the nature of pushing in cycle from head to feet and from feet to head. The feeling of hardness must rely on the pushing. Now, discern the feeling of hardness (about 45 mins).

If both characteristics can be discerned clearly, you must combine to discern the nature of

pushing and the feeling of hardness, one after another as follows. Discern pushing from head to feet, then discern the feeling of hardness from feet to head. Discern in such a cycle (more than 1 hour).

### ③ Roughness

To discern roughness, slide the tongue on the teeth. Roughness will appear.

If you are unable to discern it in this way, rub your clothes with your hands. Discern roughness in the flesh, muscles and bones in the whole body repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head.

Each characteristic is best to be discerned for (45 minutes) so that the concentration can be firmer. Otherwise, after discerning the 12 characteristics, if the cultivated concentration is not firm enough, the *Rūpa Kalāpa* cannot be discerned.

After (about 45 minutes of) discerning roughness successfully, discern pushing, hardness and roughness one after another throughout the body from head to feet and from feet to head. This means to discern pushing from head to feet, and then discern hardness from feet to head, and then discern roughness from head to feet. Then repeat ~~again~~ by discerning pushing from feet to head in cycles (more than 1 hour).

### ④ Heaviness

After successfully discerning pushing, hardness and roughness, you can start discerning heaviness. Feel your overlapping hands. The hand below feels heavier. The flesh, muscles and bones in our body are also heavier. Spread the feeling and discern repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, and heaviness one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (more than 1 hour).

### ⑤ Supporting

Subsequently, discern the nature of supporting. Keep the body upright and erect without moving it. Hold this posture. The force that keeps the body upright is supporting. Spread the feeling and discern it repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness and supporting one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (more than 1 hour).

### ⑥ Softness

Then, discern softness. Press the tongue against the inside of the lip to feel its softness and expand the feeling. The brain and bone marrow are softer than the bone. Discern softness repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

When discerning softness rapidly, some meditators will notice that their bodies turn into white color and look like cotton, because they have practiced discerning *Rūpa* and *Nāma* in their past lives, so they are able to easily practice it now.

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, and softness one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (more than 1 hour).

## ⑦ Smoothness

Subsequently, discern smoothness. Slide the tongue from side to side over the lower or upper lip and smoothness can be felt. The brain, bone marrow and flesh are smoother. Expand the feeling and discern smoothness repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, and smoothness one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (more than 1 hour).

## ⑧ Lightness

Subsequently, discern lightness. Feel your overlapping hands. The hand above is lighter. In addition, the flesh, muscles and bones are lighter than the whole body. Expand the feeling and discern lightness repeatedly in cycle from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, and lightness one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (more than 1 hour).

## ⑨ Hotness

Subsequently, discern hotness. Hotness can be easily felt because it can be found throughout the body. As long as a little hotness is felt, expand it, but do not just feel it becoming hotter because concentration will drop if it gets to be too hot. Discern hotness rapidly and repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, lightness, and hotness one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (more than 1 hour).

## ⑩ Coldness

After mastering the discerning of hotness, coldness is to be discerned. If coldness cannot be felt, use water to wash your hands and feel the coldness of the water. Find the coldness in the body, spread the feeling and discern it repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, lightness, hotness, and coldness one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (more than 1 hour).

## ⑪ Nature of Flowing

Subsequently, discern the nature of flowing. Close your eyes, discern the feeling of saliva flowing down in your mouth. Remember that feeling of flowing, spread and discern it repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, lightness, hotness, coldness, and flowing one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (more than 1 hour).

## ⑫ Nature of Cohesion

Finally, discern the nature of cohesion. Make a fist and feel the nature of cohesion. Spread the feeling and discern it repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 45 mins).

After that, discern pushing, hardness, roughness, heaviness, supporting, softness, smoothness, lightness, hotness, coldness, flowing, and cohesion one after another repeatedly in cycles from head to feet and from feet to head (about 1 hour 30 mins).

At the beginning of discerning the 12 characteristics, do not discern too long in every part of the body because by doing so you will make the feeling too excessive and the meditator will become uncomfortable, and consequently, concentration will drop.

After practicing for some time, concentration will improve and you will feel that your body will disappear and become gray in color. However, do not pay attention to its color, instead, continue to discern the 12 characteristics clearly.

# FOUR-ELEMENTS MEDITATION

VEN. U PUÑÑĀNANDA

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017

## ◆ 1<sup>st</sup> Stage (12 Characteristics, 12 *Lakkhaṇa*)

① Hardness, <i>Kakkhalāṃ</i>	⑦ Flowing, <i>Paggharaṇa</i>
② Roughness, <i>Pharusāṃ</i>	⑧ Cohesion, <i>Abandhana</i>
③ Heaviness, <i>Garukāṃ</i>	⑨ Hotness, <i>Uṇha</i>
④ Softness, <i>Mudukāṃ</i>	⑩ Coldness, <i>Sīta</i>
⑤ Smoothness, <i>Sanham</i>	⑪ Supporting, <i>Vitthambhana</i>
⑥ Lightness, <i>Lahukāṃ</i>	⑫ Pushing, <i>Samudīraṇa</i>

Duration of practice: 90 mins

## ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage (8 Characteristics, 8 *Lakkhaṇa*)

① Hardness, Roughness, Heaviness	③ Flowing	⑤ Hotness	⑦ Supporting
② Softness, Smoothness, Lightness	④ Cohesion	⑥ Coldness	⑧ Pushing

1<sup>st</sup> Stage: 30 mins

2<sup>nd</sup> Stage: 60 mins

## ◆ 3<sup>rd</sup> Stage (Four Great Elements, *Cattāro Mahābhūtā*)

① Earth Element	① Hardness, Roughness, Heaviness	② Softness, Smoothness, Lightness
② Water Element	① Flowing	② Cohesion
③ Fire Element	① Hotness	② Coldness
④ Wind Element	① Supporting	② Pushing

1<sup>st</sup> Stage: 15 mins

2<sup>nd</sup> Stage: 15 mins

3<sup>rd</sup> Stage: 60 mins

## ◆ 4<sup>th</sup> Stage (4 Characteristics, 4 *Lakkhaṇa*)

① Hardness	② Flowing	③ Hotness	④ Supporting
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1<sup>st</sup> Stage: 15 mins

2<sup>nd</sup> Stage: 15 mins

3<sup>rd</sup> Stage: 15 mins

4<sup>th</sup> Stage: 90 mins

Characteristics <i>Lakkhaṇa</i>	Time <i>Kāla</i>	Earth <i>Paṭhavi</i>						Water <i>Āpo</i>		Fire <i>Tejo</i>		Wind <i>Vāyo</i>	
		1 Hardness	2 Roughness	3 Heaviness	4 Softness	5 Smoothness	6 Lightness	7 Flowing	8 Cohesion	9 Hotness	10 Coldness	11 Supporting	12 Pushing
1 <sup>st</sup> Stage	90m	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2 <sup>nd</sup> Stage	30m	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	90m	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3 <sup>rd</sup> Stage	15m	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	15m	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	60m	✓						✓		✓		✓	
4 <sup>th</sup> Stage	15m	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	15m	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	15m	✓						✓		✓		✓	
	90m	✓	x	x	x	x	x	✓	x	✓	x	✓	x